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ABSTRACT

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has proposed a set of social studies guidelines to direct the manner in which teachers function within classrooms. This paper questions not whether there should be standards, but which standards. The paper first discusses the quest for certitude, noting that a teacher is not a farmer who tends large fields that require standardized treatment, but rather a gardener who treats each plant with special care. It then considers the nature of standards, defining a standard as an expectation based upon assumption. The paper cites and discusses the National Council for the Social Studies' 10 strands or key concepts that should underlay the teaching of social studies from K-12: (1) culture; (2) time, continuity, and change; (3) people, places, and environments; (4) individual development and identity; (5) individuals, groups, and institutions; (6) power, authority, and governance; (7) production, distribution, and consumption; (8) science, technology, and society; (9) global connections; and (10) civic ideals and practices. The paper concludes that the standards movement will be successful only if certain conditions are met and suggests specific ways to accomplish the goals established by the social studies standards. (BT)

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NCSS Standards: Quest for the Unattainable

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During the past one hundred years, a body of educators has consistently sought to develop standards for social studies education. It has been their assumption that stating goals of social studies has a direct correlation with implementation within classrooms of social studies programs which originate in a common philosophical base. This dream continues to capture the imagination of social studies educators, and has led to propogation by the National Council for the Social Studies as well as within many states, of a set of social studies guidelines to direct the manner in which teachers function within classrooms.

The question is not should we have standards but which ones. The debate as to whether or not we should have standards is analogous to arguing if we should or should not teach values. We can never escape the presence of standards. The absence of a standard is obviously a standard. Obviously, there are certain assumptions about the current debate over standards:

- Are we saying these are definitely the standards we desire for social studies education?
- Are we saying that current NCSS standards have not been met in the past? How do we know that?
- Are we saying articulating standards enables us to ensure the standards are met? In other words, is there a corelation between stating something and having that thing become reality?

The Quest for Certitude

A teacher is a gardener who treats each plant with special care. A teacher is not a farmer who tends large fields which require standardized treatment. The farmer is compelled by economic constraints to administer standardized procedures in order to ensure that each plant attain as far as possible a similar growth and development. Gardeners deal with individual situations which require tender loving care so that each bud attains its individual fruition.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have given birth to thinkers seeking to identify the regularities of life. Darwin, Marx, Freud, Einstein and a host of others believe humanity and life can be fitted into a system which lends itself to the specification of behavior. Inherent in this approach is the need to quantify both human and natural components of our existence.

Neither a teacher nor a student can ever "know" something since they are engaged in the process of "knowing." Just at the moment one believes the object of study is understood, a new door

opens into the vast regions of the unknown. One can not objectify the temporary moment of learning because that moment does not exist in temporal time. It is an existential fragment of existence which flows on to become part of something different.

Jacques Barzun and Henry Graff note that in history: "A subject does not let iself be carved away from neighboring subjects as if by a butcher carving off one chop from the next. A subject is always trying to merge itslef into the great mass of associated facts and ideas... Without unity and completeness, details make no sense." And, of course, a good historian only has temporary moments of completeness. But, the goal of standards is to provide completeness. (Barzun & Graff, the Modern Researcher, pg. 15).

The sequencing of knowledge, which is an end result of objectification of information, is predicated upon the assumption that what humans know can be quantified. A comes before B and C leads to D. This selection, organization, and sequencing of information arises from a set of beliefs and values. There is relatively minor discussion among bearers of standards concerning their ideological framework which leads to the need for quantification.

Richard Feynman challenged the exiting description of quantum physics which stated that a particle advances from point A to point B in tiny increments. Feynman's theory examined every possible route that A could take to reach B. He demonstrated there is an incredible number of ways in which things could proceed to a destination. Although Feynman developed a numerical process to identify the host of physical paths that particles could proceed upon, no one has discovered the human equivalent. On the last page of Feynman's address book are the following lines:

> Principles,
> You can't say A is made of B
> or vice versa.
> All mass is interaction.

Contemporary technocratic rationality seeks control, prediction and certainty. Testing, standardization, and categorization of humans are ideas espoused both by liberals and conservatives. The quest to pigeon-hole individuals transcends the liberal or conservative imagination. A hundred years ago Emma Goldman asked: "Is the child to be considered as an individuality, or as an object to be moulded according to the whims and fancies of those about it?" She believed the effort to impose strait-jacket thinking and control information was found as much among liberals

as it was among conservatives. Each believed they knew which information was best for students to learn.

Knowledge is not neutral nor is it ever objective. Educators parade under the banner of knowledge to legitimize a set of beliefs or a value system. In the act of objectifying knowledge, they mystify it. Students come to believe they don't know much and if they learn information provided in schools, they will become intelligent. Knowledge is presented in schools as a passive body of data which must be learned for learning sake, not because it serves as a basis for personal development or social action or empowering the individual to engage in his or her own quest for knowledge.

Humans elude all attempts to define them. We cannot codify living individuals because only in the act of death is finality introduced into the human equation. The diverse individuality of personalities defies attempts to systematize human behavior. Perhaps, we can describe a general category, but within that definition is an infinite variety of behaviors.

There is a fundamental messiness in the world, the flux of events that cannot be reduced to any set of explanatory principles. Messianic idealists seek to impose an all-embracing system of ideas which would end diversity. They seek to harmonize human interactions by offering the certainty of system to replace the chaotic reality in which we live. As T.S. Eliot said:

> Between the idea
> And the reality
> Between the motion
> And the act
> Falls the Shadow

Systematizers of knowledge believe devoutedly in their ideological certainty. Their doctrinaire thinking seeks a precise definition of learning. They offer the unfreedom of a restricted universe. As Erich Fromm argued, humanity has a strong desire to escape from freedom into the arms of totalitarian certainty. Inner freedom of thought is not facilitated by adhering to prescribed formulas from above. Inner freedom of thought inhabits an imprecise world in which knowledge is continually being altered.

The introduction of precise formulas to improve critical thinking illustrates the dilemmas of certitude. Those who teach thinking skills assume the existance of a systematic process of imparting these skills. John Baer has commented that some students may be able to think quite well, and yet be unable to describe how they think. Thus, it would be unwise to devise tests requiring students to report on their thinking processes and strategies as a

means of evaluating thinking skills. There is a difference between students defending their thinking and demanding that thinkers explain the manner in which they think.

Immanuel Kant used the metaphor of the "crooked timber of humanity from which you can never carve anything entirely straight." The quest for certitude flies in the face of the human condition. It endeavors to carve something straight from that which is inherently crooked. Perhaps, there is a straight tree of knowledge. I suspect that trees always bend with the winds of the day. A teacher has to respect the right of each tree to grow in its own crooked manner, to lose pieces to the vagaries of weather, but hopefully to continually moving toward the sun.

The Nature of Standards

What is a standard? Ravitch talks about content, proficiency and opportunity to learn standards. A standard is an expectation based upon an assumption. One dictionary definition states that a standard is "something established by authority, custom, or general consent as a model or example." Are standards norms? A standard is often cited as a criterion which is used as a test of quality formulated as a rule or principle. Inherent in our definition of standards is the belief society or a group within society have by custom or authority reached a consensus regarding something in particular.

American society during the past year has been engaged in an extensive debate regarding proper standards of moral behavior for elected officials. Despite countless columns, talk shows, speeches, and actions within the halls of Congress, there has yet to emerge a general consensus about the moral behavior of elected officials. However, numerous pundits and congressmen continue to express the view that American society does have standards about moral behavior for the President and members of Congress.

Perhaps, even more troubling issues are how does society know when there is agreement about the standard and who interprets whether or not the standard is being met? There probably is general consensus within America that one should not lie. But, recent events with President Clinton suggest that a significant proportion of the population, which does not approve of lying, is willing to allow individuals to lie in specific situations. What does this stance mean for the standard that one does not lie?

Educators are genuinely concerned about the need to establish standards within their profession. The National Council for the Social Studies has devoted extensive energy and time in the development and dissemination of social studies standards. The

authority which derives from the NCSS as the official spokesperson for social studies teachers is undoubtedly justification that its standards represent the thinking of experts and practicioners within the field of social studies.

What, then, is the assumption behind disseminating these standards? One must assume an expectation that stating standards will focus attention of social studies teachers upon what they should be teaching. Logic suggests these standards are designed to shape teaching and learning in social studies. Logic also suggests there is an assumption teachers can (a) Learn the meaning of the standards, and (b) translate the standards into operational procedures within classrooms.

As previously mentioned, a standard is something established by authority, custom, or general consent as a model or example. In a profession encompassing over two million pracitioners, it is impossible to reach a consensus about anything. Therefore, the enunciation of standards derives from authority and is invariably a top-down process. During the past fifty years, the NCSS has made several statements regarding standards within the profession. This suggests that each statement of standards is an expression of a group of authority figures rather than the will and intent of most social studies teachers.

A pattern appears to emerge in expression of standards. An authority states in writing a list of standards. This list is disseminated to members of the social studies profession. There are discussions, attempts to verify whether or not the standards are being met, and then a period of quiesence. As people move in and out of the profession, the standards gradually become something on a piece of paper which lacks vitality or relevance to the lives of teachers. Invariably, a new commission is formed to express standards.

History does not repeat itself. Each new expression of standards differs from previous attempts in several ways. Modern methods of communication enable the current set of standards to become more widely disseminated. The growing intrusion of federal and state authorities has added a more heavy handed imposition of consequences for those failing to adhere to standards. "Authority" has changed from referring to leading historians and social studies educato s to also mean political leaders and government bureaucrats.

The end result of authority establishing standards is distancing classroom teachers from ownership of their classroom standards. They come to believe standards are owned by those outside of

classrooms. This disbelief in standards imposed by forces of authority hinders teachers from engaging in their own intellectual struggles regarding the meaning of goals or the definition of quality. Their response is simply to give lip-service to those in authority.

Another fundamental problem with standards is that educators frequently fail to distinguish between a "Yardstick" and a "Standard." A yardstick usually refers to quantity rather than to quality. The vast majority of tests which require students to demonstrate knowledge relate to yardsticks rather than to standards. The statement of standards by the NCSS, as well as other groups, ignores this vital difference in definition. NCSS standards are probably more attuned to establishing a yardstick that determines quantity rather than whether or not student work is of a particular level of quality.

It is my assumption the vast majority of social studies teachers regard NCSS standards in yardstick terms. They will, probably under coercion by authorities, demonstrate in one way or another they are teaching something about a particular standard. But, the focus of their proof will be upon whether or not they attained the yardstick definition of meeting the standard. The submission of lesson plans, tests or materials will be used by classroom teachers to prove a particular quantity of their time was devoted to meeting a particular standard.

The emphasis upon yardstick definition of standards is reinforced by administrators who want specific evidence that standards are met. If they can demonstrate a textbook has material dealing with the role of women in history or African Americans or if it touches upon aspects of Chinese history, this will be cited as evidence that multiculturalism has been incorporated within the curriculum. It is the quantity of time and materials which is evidence of meeting standards rather than the quality of presentation or the quality of student response to curriculum.

It is extremely difficult within a profession which encompasses over two million teachers and fifty million students to express quality standards. Even if every teacher understood the meaning and intent of NCSS standards, it is virtually impossible to elicit from them concrete evidence their presentations were of a high quality in teaching the standards, and that student responses to this teaching attained a high level of quality.

Most discussions regarding standards examine differences of opinion concerning which standards should be guiding principles of education. Few people ask "why do we need standards?" or "how will establishing standards improve the quality of teaching and

learning?" If our goal is establishing benchmarks of student attainment, it is relatively easy to devise assessment tools which ascertain quantity. Of course, quantity is a subjective determination and not all historians or sociologists or psychologists or geographers agree on the nature of quantity within their areas of specialty, let alone on what constitutes quality of achievement in reaching the benchmark.

There is scant evidence standards do anything to improve the quality of teaching and learning. They exist to assist adults in positions of authority to feel comfortable their money is being well spent. A standard is a minimum, not a maximum. Yardsticks invariably express a base of achievement. If they expressed anything other than a minimum, a high percentage of young people would fail to attain the benchmark.

The expression of standards leads to lowering the quality of teaching and learning. A good teacher who attains a minimum uses that base to extend learning to higher levels of quality. A good teacher wants young people to reach for the stars rather than to be content with minimalizing their learning. Standards are not measures of quality and it is futile to expect anything other than the lowest level of achievement to arise from expression of standards.

NCSS Standards -- The Ten Strands

The National Council for the Social Studies has devoted extensive energy to developing and disseminating ten key concepts that should underlay the teaching of social studies K - 12. These ten statements illustrate problems arising from any statement of standards. The ten standards are ones few people in history or the social sciences would dispute as anything but valid. The issue is not the standards, but the manner in which attempting to meet standards creates a new set of problems. A detailed analysis of the ten standards illustrates these inherent problems.

1. Culture. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.

The standard states on one hand that "cultures are dynamic and ever-changing," but on the other asks "How do belief systems, such as religion and political ideas of the culture, influence other parts of the culture?" Inherent in this perspective is the belief there exists within any society a particular culture rather than cultures. Although it is not explicitly stated, there is an implied view the United States has diverse cultural groups, but other societies have a "culture." Belgium has two distinctive cultures as does Ireland and in

modern Germany about 10% of the population is Moslem and from southeast Europe. Imagine the difficulty for a typical teacher to examine the diverse cultures within any society and be able to convey that explanation to students!

The muddled thinking of framers of the standard is clearly indicated with the following explanation of how the above standard should be implemented within schools. "During the early years of school, the exploration of the concepts of likeness and differences in school subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science, music, and art makes the study of culture appropriate. Socially, the young learner is beginning to interact with other students, some of whom are like the student and some different; naturally, he or she wants to know more about others." Obviously, a group of middle class white students in suburbia or a group of African American youth in an urban area have individual differences, but, for the most part, they share a common culture with members of their specific group. This standard is equating differences between people with differences between cultural entities!

It gets even worse in the explanation of middle and secondary schools. "In the middle grades, students begin to explore and ask questions about the nature of culture and specific aspects of culture, such as language and beliefs, and the influences of those aspects on human behavior. As students progress through high school, they can understand and use complex cultural concepts such as adaptation, assimilation, acculturation, diffusion and dissonance drawn from anthropology, sociology, and other disciplines to explain how culture and cultural systems function." Whoever, wrote this has probably not been in a typical middle or high school for many years. The jargon is wonderful. Unfortunately, few if any teachers teach this type of material or even have the educational background to present it.

2. Time, Continuity and Change. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves in and over time.

According to this standard, "Human beings seek to understand their historical roots and to locate themselves in time. Such understanding involves knowing what things were like in the past and how things change and develop. Knowing how to read and reconstruct the past allows one to develop a historical perspective and to answer questions such as: Who am I? What happened in the past? How am I connected to those in the past? How has the world changed and how might it change in the future? Why does our personal sense of relatedness to the past change? How can the

perspective we have about our own life experiences be viewed as part of the larger human story across time? How do our personal stories reflect varying points of view and inform contemporary ideas and actions?"

These are all interesting topics and questions. Unfortunately, there are few social studies courses in which teachers even touch upon any of these connections. How can a typical teacher enable students to forge connections between their own life experiences and still meet state mandated requirements about what is to be covered? Perhaps, a more serious problem is that few contemporary adolescents are historical minded. They tend to be ahistorical. They live in the present and to a limited extent within the immediate future. It requires extrordinarily gifted teachers to stimulate historical mindedness.

The writers of this strand lack an understanding of young people. They state: "In the middle grades, students, through a more formal study of history, continue to expand their understanding of the past and of historical concepts and inquiry. They begin to understand and appreciate differences in historical perspectives, recognizing their interpretations are influenced by individual experiences, societal values and cultural traditions." Few middle school students learn to think this way. Fewer children in the ages of 12 - 15 have any inclination to think in historical terms or to even ask basic historical questions. The writers of this strand are asking teachers to ignore the reality of normal human growth and development within American society.

3. People, Places and Environments. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.

The teaching of geography has been a major component of social studies curriculum for over a hundred years. As this strand indicates, children have been taught the location of places and regions. Efforts have been made to connect geographical features to social and political factors. Authors of this strand have high expectations that in the middle school years, students will be encouraged to engage in "increasingly abstract thought as students use data and apply skills in analyzing human behavior in relation to its physical and cultural environment." A visitor to even the best social studies program ordinarily encounters students memorizing factual geographical data or formulating highly speculative ideas about physical features and culture. Most American students still believe "Arabs" live in the desert or that "Africa" mainly contains jungles. Few could explain why the people of Israel, who live in the

same geographical region as the people of Egypt, have developed a highly complex technological economy that resembles that of people in Norway more than it does people living in the Sudan.

The authors further state that: "Geographic concepts become central to learners' comprehension of global connections as they expand their knowledge of diverse cultures, both historical and contemporary. The importance of geographic themes to public policy is recognized and should be explored as students address issues of domestic and international significance." These authors fail to grasp that in modern times geography has less and less influence upon economies or culture. Taiwan, Korea, and Singapore exemplify how diverse geographical regions have forged similar economies, and their cultures are certainly more influenced by technology than by geography.

4. Individual Development and Identity. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity.

This strand draws heavily upon psychology, sociology, and anthropology. It expects students to become aware of the processes of learning, growth, and development at every level of their school experience. There is an expectation that students will "encounter multiple opportunities to examine contemporary patterns of human behavior, using methods from the behavioral sciences to apply core concepts drawn from psychology, social psychology, sociology, and anthropology as they apply to individuals, societies, and cultures." These are excellent goals. Unfortunately, few students take courses in psychology, sociology, or anthropology. Few teachers are well educated to relate the broad fields of psychology, sociology and anthropology to the daily lives of students. This is an example of people in authority make broad statements about expectations they have no way to implement in 90% of American schools.

5. Individuals, Groups and Institutions. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

According to this goal: "Institutions such as schools, churches, families, government agencies, and the courts all play an integral role in our lives...Thus, it is important that students know how institutions are formed, what controls and influences them, how they control and influence individuals and culture, and how institutions can be maintained and changed." This is a worthy goal for social studies, but it is one that few schools ever handle. How many American teachers could teach about the Jewish, Catholic, Protestant denominations, or the various factions within the Moslem

religion? It is even more ironic that rarely is the history and development of schools ever taught in social studies. One can only wonder how many social studies teachers believe themselves competent to teach about schools through an historic lens? Although many schools are engaged in law related education, few teach about the history of crime or the evolution of courts from colonial to modern times. I doubt if there are more than a handful of people in this room who could discuss the evolution of the concept of police, the changing role of lawyers in American history or the nature of crime in early American history. Social studies teachers do not learn about the history of courts and crime so how could they teach about the institution of courts? Embedded within this goal is the following statement: "They should also have opportunities to explore ways in which institutions such as churches or health care networks are created to respond to changing individual and group needs." The implication of this goal is that social studies teachers should engage students in examining contemporary churches and how they respond to individual and group needs. Few teachers will even touch this topic because it is volatile and could lead to hostile reactions from members of their community. Perhaps, even more difficult for the average social studies teacher is to discuss health care networks. Few know much about them and even fewer have any inclination to learn about them.

6. Power, Authority and Governance. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance.

This strand raises legitimate issues about the nature of power, authority and governance. "What is power? What forms does it take? Who holds it? how is it gained, used, and justified?" It suggests that learners will examine the "purposes and characteristics of various governance systems," in order to gain understanding of "how groups and nations attempt to resolve conflicts and seek to establish order and security." This is certainly a valid aim of social studies education, but it simply is not the goal of the overwhelming majority of social studies teachers. Few examine how groups within France, Germany, Russia, Hungary, India or Liberia clash over ideals. Instead, these societies are presented as though there was a common understanding within the society about goals or values. How many teachers have the background or time to study Italian politics? How many people in this room could discuss the impact of Le Pen on French politics or explain the nature of neo-Nazi thinking among

East Germans or intelligently discuss the role of former communists in Polish and Hungarian societies?

The authors claim that "High school students develop their abilities in the use of abstract principles. They study the various systems that have been developed over the centuries to allocate and employ power and authority in the governing process." It is doubtful if one percent of American secondary students could discuss changes in the French governing system over the past one hundred years let alone discuss changes in Turkish governance or that of Rumania. Most teachers teach chronologically rather than thematically and few have sufficient knowledge to teach thematically about other societies.

7. Production, Distribution and Consumption. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how groups organize for the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services.

This strand examines basic issues about distribution of resources. It asks: "What is to be produced? How is production to be organized? How are goods and services to be distributed? What is the most effective allocation of the factors of production?" According to this strand, "High school students develop economic perspectives and deeper understanding of key economic concepts and processes through stystematic study of a range of economic and sociopolitical systems, with particular emphasis on the examination of domestic and global economic policy options related to matters such as health care, resource use, unemployment and trade."

These are excellent goals for the study of economics. It is extremely doubtful if more than a small percent of American secondary teachers could present even a limited view regarding socialism or communism as economic systems. Few American teachers are aware of economic systems functioning in diverse societies such as Korea, Singapore, Kenya or South Africa. This is another example of making broad statements without being aware of complexities in the implementation of the goals. How many people in this room feel comfortable discussing the economic system now operational in Singapore?

8. Science, Technology and Society. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of relationships among science, technology, and society.

The essence of this standard refers to educating youth concerning the impact of science and technology upon life in the past and the present. In reality, the word "science" is only mentioned twice and is cited in reference to technology. "Modern

life as we know it would be impossible without technology and the science that supports it." "They will find that science and technology bring changes that surprise us and even challenge our beliefs, as in the case of discoveries and their applications related to our universe, the genetic basis of life, atomic physics, and others." What is one to make of the latter sentence? Does it refer to specific scientific discoveries which challenge "our beliefs?" If so, which of these scientific discoveries are challenging which beliefs? The public is undoubtedly concerned about genetics and many people have formulated ideas concerning ethical issues related to it, but how many people are concerned about "atomic physics" or could even make connections between their value system and changes in atomic physics?

There is no statement in this strand about the importance of educating youth in the history of science, with particular emphasis upon scientific thought that impacts values and beliefs. Instead, cliches are thrown about such as "By middle grades, students can begin to explore the complex relationship among technology, human values and behavior." It is doubtful if more than a handful of teachers offer sophisticated educational experiences for students in the area of technology and change. There is no question even fewer engage youth with the history of scientific thought.

9. Global connections. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.

This strand moves from obligatory statements about the importance of young people understanding global interdependence to statements which suggest a total misunderstanding of the nature of how children learn. "Through exposure to various media and first-hand experiences, young learners become aware of and are affected by events on a global scale. Within this context, students in early grades examine and explore global connections and basic issues and concerns suggesting and initiating responsive action plans."

Concepts such as time, distance, and culture are beyond the comprehension of most young people. Exposure to "media" means that if students regularly watch the six o'clock TV news they will receive approximately four minutes each day about a confusing mixture of countries and problems. They will be "educated" by TV newscasters who only know what they read on the screen. Unfortunately, only The New York Times, the Washington Post, and the Los Angeles Times maintain permanent overseas bureaus. Over 99% of American newspapers are unable to maintain trained

reporters in other societies who know the history, culture, and language of the nation they are reporting about to the American public.

There is a glaring weakness among social studies teachers regarding knowledge of current events. How many social studies teachers could offer even the rudiment of an explanation to their classes of the current situation among Kurds in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran? How many could discuss the impact of geographical and natural resources upon the Kurdish situation? We inhabit a world in which massive quantities of information flood the Internet or TV, but few educators have sufficient knowledge to assimilate this data and provide meaning to their students.

10, Civic ideals and practices. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.

This strand discusses a set of cliches with which no one would disagree. It stresses the importance of civic participation and analyzing the difference between ideals and practices. A view of student engagement is postulated which any American would conclude is desirable. "High school students increasingly recognize the rights and responsibilities of citizens in identifying societal needs, setting directions for public policies, and working to support individual dignity and the common good." Of course, the common good for African Americans who are hassled on the New Jersey Turnpike which maintains a "profile" of people to be halted may not coincide with the common good of the New Jersey State Police.

The community which secondary students inhabit is the high school. In reality, few high schools allow students to help set policy directions, and even fewer allow students to take civic roles in organizing the manner in which high schools function. High schools are not democratic institutions; they are authoritarian in structure and direction. Why ask youth to change the world outside when they lack the power to change the world in which they inhabit?

Concluding Remarks

The standards movement will only be successful if certain conditions are met. As Bay and Reys emphasize in their study of standard-based math curriculum, teachers believe their success in attaining the stated standards was dependent upon: (1) time to become familiar with the standards including discussion with colleagues; (2) interaction with experts including authors of the standards, and (3) development of new assessment devices.

We presently are unable to meet these conditions in social studies. Furthermore, as I have endeavored to indicate, the language of social studies standards does not lend itself to clearly articulated standards. Let me suggest specific ways to move in attaining social studies standards:

1. Let us begin by focusing on no more than two standards per year. This will enable social studies educators to focus intently on fewer things in more depth. This post-holing approach might replace quantity with quality.
2. College social studies educators should model NCSS standards in their university classrooms. This will allow us to avoid the multiple intelligence movement in which college educators talk, but never practice in their university classrooms how to teach employing multiple intelligences.
3. Selected liberal arts faculty in history, political science, etc.. should be encouraged and supported in implementing NCSS standards in their courses to again provide prospective social studies teachers with models.
4. Model lesson plans and units should be developed and shared via Internet to provide concrete examples of how one implements the standards while teaching American or World History or Georgraphy, etc...
5. Let us shift accountability away from students to classroom teachers and college educators. If we can not attain these standards ourselves, how can we blame children for failure to attain these standards?
6. John Goodlad has frequently noted that the language of educational reform carries with it connotations of things gone wrong. "The language is not uplifting" states Goodlad. Social Studies standards must be connected to energizing the individual's quest for knowledge, not for acquiring information. As Joseph Schwab once commented:

> "Not only the means, however, but also the ends of liberal education involve the Eros. For the end includes not only knowledge gained, but knowledge desired and knowledge sought. The outcome of a successful liberal arts curriculum is actively intelligent people." (Joseph Schwab, Eros and Education, Puerto Rico Faculty of General Studies, U. of Puerto Rico, 1958, pg. 63)

If standards do not aid in the quest to assist youth to become creators of knowledge, then we may have the wrong standards in place. The Ten Strands of the NCSS represent a melange of cliches which could never be operationalized given the nature of social

studies education. They represent muddled thinking undoubtedly stemming from group process consensus in which every interest group or point of view is represented. They reflect the goals of adults with limited understanding concerning the manner in which young people live or think. Perhaps, even more damning is the failure to recognize the miseducation of social studies teachers which leaves them ill prepared to implement the Ten Strands.

The Ten Strands furthermore represent the fundamental problem with stating standards. Many of the standards refer to expectations which are impossible to attain. Education is a "long loop" endeavor in which teachers will never know if their students in maturity become imbued with civic ideals or take a stand to implement democratic practices. The only way to evaluate the global dimensions of these strands is to test students upon recall of factual data not upon their internalization of the goals. Thus, we evaluate that which is easiest to evaluate, not that which is of importance.